



STAMFORD MAYOR
MICHAEL A. PAVIA

Mayor's Youth Employment Program

2013
Expands
Opportunities

Now in its third year, the Mayor's Youth Employment Program (MYEP) of Stamford was created as the nation faced an economic downturn and shrinking job market. Mayor Michael Pavia realized that skilled and overqualified employees, who had been recently laid off from major corporations, were now occupying the jobs typically reserved for teenagers during the summer months. This unprecedented event hindered many students from obtaining their first job experience, and as a result, families in Stamford who rely on their teenager's additional seasonal income, would be faced with additional hardship.

In 2010, Mayor created the MYEP program with the belief that, "We have a responsibility to our youth, and to our community, to inspire tomorrow, today." Given the economic climate, Mayor felt that high school students were not likely to secure such jobs unless he garnered support from the local business community to help create access to the jobs they needed.

Mayor also believed this was a great opportunity to create a stronger workforce of tomorrow by students receiving "real-world" experience in paying jobs, supplemented by professional development workshops and community-focused team projects with measurable outcomes. "I invited the community to partner with me to create the opportunity Stamford's students deserved," said Mayor Pavia. The results have been outstanding.

The program has impacted 82 students in its' first two years, and welcomed 75 more students to the program this year. Since the program's inception, high school students have discovered their interests and strengths, and created an outstanding skillset and career plan for the future.

"To me, the Mayor's Youth Employment Program stands for much more than just providing jobs for teens in Stamford. It has prepared me for the work world through experiential learning," said Westhill High School graduate Jon Berman. "I have been exposed to a working environment similar to the one in which I would like to work after I graduate from college. Through the Mayor's Youth Employment Program, I now have the experience and skills to approach the job market with confidence."

The program has seen a three-fold growth in business participation as businesses from the corporate, private, non-profit, and government sectors have worked together to make an incredible impact on the community.

This year, the MYEP evolved into a new and innovative partnership, joining forces with Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide and Sacred Heart University, to introduce the emerging field of Digital Marketing. Twenty students were given the

opportunity to receive Digital Marketing instruction, followed by three weeks of work experience with Information Technology and Digital Marketing professionals at Starwood's International Headquarters in Stamford, courtesy of SHU and Starwood employees.

"This is an unprecedented level of partnership that is already unique and distinctive in its approach and truly supports the mission of the MYEP program," said Mayor Pavia. "We now know that the MYEP is on track to be a national best-practice model that other major cities should follow.

The inauguration of Sacred Heart University's digital marketing program in Stamford is another validation of the City's diverse business base, well-positioned for the 21st century economy," noted Mayor Pavia. "From Stamford's global companies such as Starwood Hotels and Resorts, to its many entrepreneurial startups, digital marketing is a key component of any company's online communications and branding strategy. I am very pleased that Sacred Heart has made this worthwhile decision to expand its curriculum and locate in our city."

The MYEP Closing Ceremonies, held at the Ferguson Library on June 27th, were attended by than 200 students, family members, employers and sponsors. The event featured several video presentations developed and organized entirely by the student interns, in addition to their work at their respective jobs. This year's presentations focused on a number of community topics:

"Putting Stamford on the Map" – A video promoting the City of Stamford and why it is a great place to live and work.

"Make MYEP Burst!" – A series of videos to be posted on an App called BURST, promoting highlights of the Mayor's Youth Employment Program.

"STARBURST" – Videos to post on an App called BURST to highlight the partnership between the Mayor's Youth Employment Program, Starwood Hotels and Sacred Heart University.

"30 Seconds to Success" – 11 videos which guide viewers through 10 key points to success in the workplace.

"HIV Prevention" – A public service video for teens in HIV Prevention and Education.

"MarcUS for Change" -- A promotional video highlighting MarcUS for Change, a non-profit organization that improves the academic, social and mental well-being of middle-school aged boys. The organization was created to honor the life of Stamford resident Marcus Dixon.

The program closed with "A Tribute to Mayor Pavia", a touching and heartfelt video which thanked Mayor Pavia for creating the Mayor's Youth Employment Program, and for his support and dedication to the City of Stamford.

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“Overall, this hands-on work experience taught me hundreds of new things ranging from general business to individual roles within a company. I was able to meet several outgoing employees who helped me out every step of my 5 week journey at Starwood. I finally got to see how little life lessons could be applied to real world situations. Not only has Starwood taught me, but it morphed me into a more knowledgeable and confident individual. My insecurities about entering the real corporate world have diminished and I cannot thank Starwood, Sacred Heart University and the MYEP enough. I will forever remain a changed person.”

Chris Polidoro (Starwood Intern)

“We set out to support the youth employment needs of Stamford and address the growing need for digital marketers in the business community. In the process, we met 20 engaging and bright high school students who captured our hearts and far exceeded our expectations. I'm not sure who got more out of this experience, the students or us. Mayor Pavia speaks of the crossroads that our teens face at this pivotal point in their young lives and we are proud to help steer students down a better path. It is amazing how far kids can go in a short period of time given the right opportunity.”

Ken Siegel (Chief Administrative Officer Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide, Inc.)

“When highly-motivated students are connected with high-performing nonprofits like New Neighborhoods, Inc.; The Housing Development Fund; Stamford Center for the Arts and the Women's Business Development Council, it's a win-win. The students are able to learn job skills critical to their future success while working to better the communities where we live and work.”

Bill Tommins, Southern Connecticut market president, Bank of America



BOTTOM: Mayor's Youth Employment Program Class of 2013; **TOP LEFT:** "Pork in the Park" 2013 to benefit the Mayor's Youth Employment Program; **TOP RIGHT:** 2013 Mayor's Golf Tournament to benefit the Mayor's Youth Employment Program

